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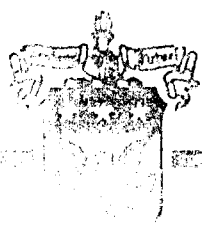
EFFECTS OF GENERALIZATION AND SPECIALIZATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMANDERS

BY

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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) The essay covers the proper mix of generalists and specialists in the Army's Officer Corps. A historical summary is presented on the development of generalists--specialists over the past 30 years. Current management techniques/programs/systems are analyzed and discussed, pointing up strengths and weaknesses in them. Army studies influencing the current direction are discussed as they relate to the focus of the study. The research and discussion support well founded conclusions such as: Generalists are usually			

Item 20. continued.

those selected for command; OPMS provides specialists but does not necessarily groom commanders; Civilian education remains beneficial to both groups; "Troop duty" must be recognized as a speciality. Stability among systems is required. e.g., OPMS TAADS; Careerism is normal in personal goal setting and should not necessarily be faulted; Changes in OPMS are needed to place skilled generalists in command.

US ARMY WAR COLLEGE
INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH BASED ESSAY

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I. INTRODUCTION

A statement in The Armed Forces Officer of 1950—more than 32 years ago—recognized the need for specialization and, concurrently, cited the need for the officer to consider becoming a generalist:

Those who get to the top have to be many sided men, with skill in the control and guidance of a multifarious variety of activities. Therefore, even the young specialist, who has his eyes on a narrow track because his talents seem to lie in that direction, is well advised to raise his sights and extend his interests to the far horizons of the profession, even while directing the greater part of his force to a particular field.

The other aspect of this warning is to deter officers from becoming specialists because of the inevitable transfer from specialist to generalist as the career opportunities for advancement develop. The above statement was prepared in 1949. Ten years later, in 1959, the Chief of Ordnance, US Army, recognized the complexity of Army operations and the increasingly important development of the generalist in the officer corps. Simultaneously, he cited the growing need for specialization:

In today's environment of rapid technological advancement and the increasing complexity of military equipment, it is virtually impossible for an officer to be proficient in all aspects of operations or functions within his respective arm or service. Yet, specialization precludes the development of an officer in across-the-board areas and confines his experience and training to a narrow field.

The officer of today manages large organizations with varied and complex functions. The question, then, is: how can the Army officer be best trained and developed so as to be most effective in higher command and staff assignments?

A continuing concern of 23 years ago, the above statement reflects a failure of the Army to correct a situation developing in 1949 by 1959, and worse yet, to have corrected the problem satisfactorily by 1982. In fairness, progress has been made as "modernization" — by either 1949 or 1982 standards — alters the needs of the army during both peace and war. Modernization requires a greater number of specialists, a more highly educated officer corps, management systems capable of providing the correct skills at the required job location, a dynamic training system capable of both producing capable personnel and adapting to continuously changing requirements for these personnel, and flexibility for management. Modernization is demanded by the field as requirements for capabilities and skills are deemed necessary by trial and error. Even through futuristic planning of the highest quality, changing requirements continue to drive modernization which is, in turn, driven by the enemy's — the Soviet's — modernization programs. No one argues with this evolution of needs. Our problem is one of limited resources — money, material, and manpower. And, in the manpower category, the issue is how best to meet our needs as we change.

The subject of this study is concern for the proper mix of generalists and specialists in the US Army Officer Corps. Not only is the mix itself dynamic — as modernization continues — but so are the contributors: accession, training, education, management, and retention. All are necessary for a healthy corps of generalists and specialists, and all must be altered — modernized — to keep pace with a total system that meets the Army's future needs.

To produce something that meets a goal, the goal itself must exist. It does not. What is the Army's goal with respect to Specialists: number, type, quality, capabilities, performance objectives? And, what

generalists are required? What are their numbers, types, qualities and attributes, capabilities, and performance objectives to be?

The Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) was initially established to change the way officer's careers were managed. Numerous factors were considered and influenced the earliest development of OPMS. It is important to remember that OPMS is a management system which responds to policy guidance. It is therefore, a tool which through evolution has kept pace with demands fairly well. But, is it all it can be? Should it be changed to meet modern requirements? It has been changed — in September 1981 — when the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) became law. DOPMA is designed to remove inequities from among the commissioned officer management system of all the armed services and to ensure for active duty officers predictable career milestones until retirement.³ It has, therefore, altered the management of US Army officers, although the Secretary of the Army retains the prerogatives of managing all US Army officers as he deems necessary, subject to provisions of the law. Responding to the Secretary of the Army's needs, research is being completed on a computer-aided career information and planning system for Army officers. The Officer Career Information and Planning System (OCIPS) will provide another step forward in furnishing a number of benefits to both the Army officer and Army management.⁴

DOPMA, OPMS, and OCIPS represent improving management techniques and concerns for the US Army Officer Corps. But, are the needs of the Army for generalists and specialists being met? How good are the products? Are we seeking specialization at the expense of generalization? Are the generalists of the future optimally trained, motivated,

and satisfied with careers? Are future commanders at senior levels adequately, or optimally, experienced generalists? Are they the best America can produce to defend our freedom? If not, what leadership strategy do we need to pursue to get the best?

II. DEFINITIONS

As indicated in the introduction, there are many issues surrounding and implicit in the Generalist vs. Specialist question. A number of efforts to resolve it have failed to unite on what these identities are, what characteristics they share or do not share, and what functions they perform. Therefore, some basic definitions are essential before treating the larger question.

A. "Specialist." Under OPMS, the specialist in question is a commissioned officer, not a warrant officer — although the warrant officer concept more readily depicts a "pure" specialist. "A 'specialty' is a grouping of duty positions whose skill and job requirements are mutually supporting in the development of officer competence to perform at the grade of colonel in the specialty." From the same source, a 'specialty skill identifier' is "an identification of specific position skill requirements within a specialty and the corresponding qualifications possessed by commissioned officers."⁵ The Review of Education and Training for Officers (RETO) study defined a specialist as "... an officer whose training, education and utilization are geared to the need for applying a narrowly definable body of subject matter expertise in the performance of his duties — to the exclusion of much other information previously required of Army officers." The RETO study implies two degrees of specialization by defining a second category as a "True Specialist who is an officer whose training, education and demonstrated

performance identify him/her as an in-depth expert in the subject matter of that specialty field."⁶ Specialization in the military is a function of the proliferation of knowledge in society at large. There is no question that technical competency sufficient for the Army of the 1980's and 1990's requires officers to specialize by limiting their fields of expertise to very narrow bounds and thereby accumulating in-depth experience. The finite limits of an individual's career of, ideally, thirty years of service dictate the efficient use of time by each officer. Thus, the time available for specialization is critical for success. On the other hand, time available to serve in specialties other than the primary and secondary is extremely limited.

B. "Generalist." The generalist officer is simply one who has served in an undefined, but varying number of positions leading to experience and on-the-job, if not formal, training or schooling and expertise. The term seems to apply to almost any officer who cannot be deemed a "specialist" under criteria established for that label. It is therefore, important to recognize that these two terms — "generalist" and "specialist" — are relative. The degree to which an officer may be either may be a matter of perception... thus "beauty is in the eyes of the beholder." This complicates the issue of definition because specialization may occur in varying degrees in an officer's career and yet he may be considered a "generalist". The RETO Study furnished the following definition of a generalist which is adequate for the purposes of this treatise:

An officer whose primary efforts are involved in the management of more than one specialty field. For example, a manager of logistics, intelligence and personnel administration is a generalist. An installation manager is a generalist. Most commanders, at least above company level, are generalists. DA staff members may be specialists,

functional generalists or generalists. One might even say that a true generalist is an officer whose training, education, experience and demonstrated performance in positions of wide ranging responsibilities identify him/her as an expert in the planning and integration of all arms and services. The very highest positions in the Army call for true generalists.

It must be pointed out that a flaw technically exists in the initial sentence of the above definition. "More than one specialty field" can be two — which every officer carries by definition. Therefore, what is meant — as the example demonstrates — is some degree of experience in at least three specialties . . . one of which may be the branch specialty. As is often cited by anyone writing on the subject, the fact that more officers must become specialists to cope with the future needs of the Army means that relatively fewer officers will be able to serve in non-assigned specialty positions. In addition, the objective of OPMS is to insure that this so-called "mal-utilization" does not occur. As it does not occur, so will the number of generalists decline. There is built-in design failure — if generalists are needed.

C. "Commander." A detailed definition of a commander is not required, however several characteristics of this position need to be mentioned. First, a commander is an officer who is a leader and manager of personnel and resources. His primary objective is to assure that the mission is accomplished. He alone is ultimately responsible. Command, leadership, and management are inextricable intertwined. My simple definition of management is "getting things done by people in an organization." Both command and leadership necessarily include management to be effective and successful. Command provides authority; leadership gets the best out of subordinates; and management provides and runs the organization. There is no substitute for informed, capable, motivated, experienced leadership. The problem is that leaders are not born

experienced. For an officer to gain experience in several fields (read specialties) it is necessary for him/her to have training in or serve in them. Second, the commander is not serving as a specialist if his primary responsibility is command and management because he cannot simultaneously do both. His command position may be related to his specialty, but his function is management, not specialization in terms of the definition in paragraph A. Hence, he develops a degree of specialization by managing many specialties pursuant to the execution of his duties. A third characteristic of command is that characteristics of command in one "specialty" (Armor, Infantry, Signal, Artillery or Ordnance) are similar to those of another by virtue of the "management function". Thus "command" differs from "specialization" in that expertise is developed in the function of management and/or leadership which is applicable to most, if not all, organizations regardless of the "specialty" involved. A commander may be a specialist — or even a 'true' specialist' — but when in the command role, he no longer functions as one. A commander is a leader and manager, and a leader of managers.

III. OFFICERS' CAREER

A. Institutional Management. The Army has always had a "system" for managing personnel, within which rather more specialized attention has been given to officers. Roots of current systems return to the Officer Personnel Act (OPA) of 1947 and the later Officer Grade Limitation Act (OGLA) of 1954. Then the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) was unsuccessfully introduced in 1976 and 1978 being approved by the House of Representatives but, lost when the Senate failed to act on each occasion. Much later, after acceptable terms involving both the Congress and the Department of Defense were reached, DOPMA was signed into law and became effective on 15 September 1981. Affecting all uniformed services, it dictates many policies of the US Army Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) as well.

1. DOPMA. The implementation of DOPMA is alleged to correct faults in the previously existing OPA and OGLA which were, in turn, attempts to return the active forces to smaller, post-WW II levels. Other faults were to be improved via DOPMA, for example, the reestablishment of a single promotion system, adequate manning of senior officers requirements, reasonable career opportunities and a clearly defined promotion system. DOPMA removes most remaining bars on utilization of female officers, although the law remains which excludes women from assignment to ships and aircraft in combat and to certain combat arms units in the Army. One of the most important aspects of DOPMA is the establishment of an all-regular force early in the officers' careers

(i.e. in the 10th year of service). Although not precluding Reserve officers from serving a full active duty career, DOPMA virtually insures that all field grade officers are regular army. If not selected for promotion to major (0-4), most officers will be terminated. Few may be continued on active duty under appropriate provisions of policy. DOPMA has other affects upon personnel policy as it provides details regarding board composition and separation, instructions to boards, standard language (across the services) for the oath of office rendered by board members, etc. At least one Reserve Officer must sit on boards examining officers that include Reservists. DOPMA ties all elements of officer personnel management — promotions, career expectations, regular appointments, selection boards, retirement points, passovers, continuation, and the all-regular career force — together and sets the legal parameters within which the Army's Officer Personnel Management System will function.⁸

2. OPMS. It is interesting to note that OPMS was implemented as a result of the 1970 Study on Military Professionalism conducted by the US Army War College. Staffed by the ODCSPER and the Major Commands (MACOM's), OPMS was formulated, improved by suggestions from the field, and published in 1972. Several factors — previously mentioned in paragraph one, above,—both influenced the early development of OPMS and are pertinent today as it is reviewed within a purely-Army perspective:

- o the size of the US Army was decreasing from Vietnam levels.
- o the demand for specialization in a much reduced force was anticipated to maintain peacetime readiness.
- o a skill imbalance was caused by a force containing too many combat trained officers, but too few technically skilled officers.

- o the opportunity to command declined as combat and combat support units were deactivated.
- o the old promotion system encouraged generalization—all officers were expected to do all jobs well; consequently, few were trained or experienced in technical fields.
- o the officer corps was looking for improved professionalism and increased career satisfaction.⁹

The objectives of OPMS were established to develop officers in the correct numbers and with the right skills to satisfy Army requirements by taking advantage of the inherent abilities, aptitudes and interests of the individual officer; assign officers according to the Army's needs and the individual's competence and desires; and improve the motivation and satisfaction of the officer corps through a disciplined, dual-specialty, professional development system. Recently, three additional changes were instituted. First, the Secretary of the Army approved promotion by specialty procedure which include selection floors for all OPMS specialties for all field grade officers. Second, to systematically fill command positions, a central selection process ensured consideration of all officers with appropriate skills and performance record. Finally, the Department of Defense (DOD) changed stability guidance which caused a change in the method of Command and General Staff College (CGSC) selection and attendance scheduling.¹⁰

Because the total officer personnel picture is driven by factors beyond OPMS, these factors should be mentioned. The primary objective of OPMS is obviously to satisfy Army requirements. The priority of these requirements is stated in the Department of the Army Master Priority List (DAMPL), which assigns priorities to personnel resources —

among others — for commands world wide. Support is provided according to a Personnel Priority Model (PPM) and distributed by an Officer Distribution Plan (ODP). The ODP is prepared in consideration of authorizations. The official source of authorizations for personnel management rests at DA and is known as the Personnel Structure and Composition System (PERSACS). Thus, the ODP is a projection of authorizations for up to 24 months into the future. An accurate projection of authorizations is critical to the success in determining the proper distribution of available officers. It is also important that PERSACS data is verified by MACOMS who review, correct, and update the data prior to its being used as a basis for the ODP.¹¹

The problem, as will be discussed later, is that changes to the force structure are submitted to ODCSOPS/force structure planners. The time lag impacts on MILPERCEN operators who develop and distribute from the ODP which has been reviewed and corrected by MACOMS and coordinated with ODCSOPS, DA. Continuous "requirements" thus originate from the field, almost always lag the system's dynamics, and are often filled by officers assigned to the installation where the "requirement" exists. Thus, an officer is normally diverted to what is perceived to be an essential duty position, an authorized position is left vacant, new officer specialty positions are created, the grade/specialty structure is imbalanced, and both the ODP and OPMS are circumvented. In this way the system is destroyed by well-meaning, but manipulative and short-sighted commanders who are faced with a local emergency need for a particular grade and specialty of officer. I do not fault them in every case: often the Army places missions on commanders for which there are no alternatives and any prudent individual must act. Therefore, the

system needs to be adjusted or changed to allow "slippage". The problem results from specialty descriptions being introduced into the system which are subverted in the field; there, as incumbents depart, a false requirement exists creating a false "demand" on the limited assets in the officer corps.

3. OCIPS. The Officer Career Information and Planning System (OCIPS) was designed to be a computerized data system to implement officer career planning and utilization. The current theory and opinion on career development were analyzed and five basic concepts for the Army officer were identified:

- o personal choice is inevitable,
- o choice should be based on personal understanding,
- o not every career outcome is predictable,
- o planning involves commitment and uncertainty; and
- o life stages provide predictable changes.¹²

This system is seen as providing a number of benefits to the Army officer and to Army management, including:

- o greater ability of an officer to take responsibility of his or her own career decision making;
- o greater officer satisfaction and increased knowledge of the career-enhancing potentialities of various assignments;
- o better fit of officer-to-job based on the consideration of aptitudes, values, interests, education, training, and experiences;
- o greater equity and efficiency in the career management system; and
- o greater opportunity for career managers to concentrate on counselor functions.¹³

The importance of this system lies in its linkage to a real-time capability to interrogate a current officer career plan that has been placed in the system by the officer and evaluate certain criteria that will impact upon the officer's specialty and utilization. This capability will add to the ease with which officer managers would be able to revise and adjust the officer inventory to meet Army requirements. In terms of this paper, it would allow the officer corps to evaluate their individual career strategies, compare them with "milestones" of other officers of similar specialties, and allow choice. For example, with the current dual-track system, expressing a preference for an alternate specialty is a critical choice point in an officer's career. A rich data file relating officer characteristics and preferences to alternate specialty designation affords the user a unique opportunity to engage in choice. It can also provide the officer with the opportunity to explore and compare his/her characteristics with those of officers for whom any given specialty was designated during the previous year and to integrate this information into an effective career strategy. Modules can provide a detailed self-assessment, career strategies, and system evaluation for the OPMS managers. This system was designed primarily for company grade officers but, is easily adaptable to field grade levels, warrant officers, etc. Thus, it could provide a significant aid to those officers who may be faced with the tough choice of "Generalist" or "Specialist", the opportunities for success, and the risks of failure with attendant alternatives.

B. Individual View. The commitment of the individual member of the Army officer corps is a function of being bound by an emotional and intellectual pursuit of a given goal. The RETO Study indicated that, if an officer is committed, he will demonstrate:

- o a strong desire to remain part of the Army;
- o a willingness to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the Army;
- o a definite belief in, and acceptance of, the basic values and goals of the Army (while still being able to criticize and question specific actions of the Army when necessary); and
- o a deep concern about the fate of the Army.¹⁴

This commitment impacts on, and is impacted by, an officer's personal experiences with promotions, school selections, Officer Efficiency Reports, assignment opportunities — all of which are part of the system. Satisfactions of many types are built-in contributors to the officers' decision making process, and the synthesis of these form the officers' willingness to be manipulated by the system as well as his satisfaction of treatment by the system. This general observation has significance only in the degree to which the individual officer is willing to tolerate system-initiated variances to his perceived goals. Assignments are the most critical — either reinforcing or detrimental.

The conclusions of the 1978 RETO Studies were that the ultimate effectiveness of the Army in carrying out its wartime and peacetime missions is directly related to the state of education, training and commitment to its members. The effective Army officer — either specialist or generalist — is one who is trained in skills needed; one who is educated in the knowledge and insights necessary for successful mission accomplishment within the context of broader organizational goals; and one who is committed to do his duty faithfully and well.¹⁵ This conclusion places a premium on education, but there are two other elements to be considered in evaluating the officer's perception of his management system: his duty assignment (the "signposts" of his career)

and his personal experiences with such intangible, but important elements as leadership, promotions, efficiency reports, satisfaction and others. Therefore, before moving to the issue of command which is the ultimate goal of this paper, it is necessary to fill in a bit of a typical officer's educational, assignment and personal experience which impacts on his becoming a "specialist or a generalist."

1. Education. Education falls generally into four categories: civilian education, graduate education, military education and military training. This distinction is made for the purpose of categorizing — in general terms—the types of specialty (and specialist) producing education versus the education which is frequently possessed by generalists.

First, civilian education has become the norm at the bachelors' degree level. Most officers derive commissions from baccalaureate degree producing sources: ROTC programs and USMA input. As the Army moves toward specialization, a greater consideration of the nature of this educational degree will be given. It has been suggested that the ROTC program might be a tool for developing more precisely those specialty skills the Army needs. In our current peace-time situation with abundant options, the use of certain education is an important way to begin the categorization process to benefit the Army. Perhaps it would be most "humane" to build the "vision of an Army career" in terms of specialty, culminating for most at the grade of O6 (colonel) in staff-directorship positions of management rather than in troop-command positions. At this beginning point in the young officers' career, if he accepts the "vision", future disappointment in not being a commander can be significantly decreased and the "image of failure" can be avoided. Or, he can be made aware of the specific hurdles and odds which dictate

adopting the commander-option route in his career.

Second, graduate level education normally occurs later in an officers' career . . . that is, only preordained specialists enter the Army with graduate degrees and, for these officers, specialization is desired, expected and accepted. Thus, the corollary, becoming a generalist with a view toward the "normal" command tours in the combat arms or combat support or service support branches, is not at issue. For officers who seek and obtain graduate degrees during the first third of a thirty-year career, specialization is to be anticipated, depending upon the nature of the degree. Care must be exercised here lest one equate advanced civil degree with "specialist". Not true! Most of our engineer officers, for example, require graduate level study to become operators/manager/commanders of highly complex and technical organizations. Many of these organizations are specialized — but the function of the officer may be that of manager/leader or manager of leaders with technical understanding of the organizational characteristics. The Army also has positions in the field for which commanders submit requirements, although this is subject to review by the Army Education Requirements Board (AERB) who validates justified positions. In the future, with the proliferation of newly-created, highly-directional, specialized course introduced into graduate school curricular in the technical fields, perhaps the Army needs to use course content, rather than nominal degree fields for tracking specialists. This point is only an aside, but leaves opportunity for selecting outside of a given discipline if selection criteria for required duty positions do not match up. Or, put another way, this would allow "generalists" to share in sufficient expertise to significantly enhance his/her performance in a

"command" position without jeopardizing the selection process within the system. In any event, the old adage that a graduate degree is not necessary to be a successful officer — much less a successful commander — is rapidly becoming obsolescent. To be sure it isn't necessary, but the majority of the officer corps considers it to be performance-aiding, if not career-enhancing . . . regardless of what the official "view" may be. The officer corps seeks the opportunity for advanced civilian education; perceives the degree as an element of personal, if not professional success; and is gaining the opportunity to obtain this greater skill and knowledge by virtue of reduced turbulence through greater stabilization and the introduction of the Regimental System.

Third, the opportunity for military education is perceived as a gauge of relative success. This selection process will effectively occur only for attendance at the resident Command and General Staff College courses and the Senior Service College courses. Most officers, by grade, will attend the branch basic course, the branch advanced course, and the new Combined Arms Services Staff School (CAS³) at Fort Leavenworth. Thus a "failure to progress" signal will be reserved until nearly half-way through a twenty-year career. The point here is that both a "military education" and "specialization-choice" opportunity will tend to occur together approximately the eighth year of service—in time to influence the direction an officer should point his career if he is to succeed under the current system. For the specialist who deserves to continue in this field, there is lesser impact, even if not selected by the "system" for attendance at CGSC. For the officer who may prefer continued troop duty and a "generalist" path, the system is providing him an indicator of his likely success as he competes with peers for those "too-few" command opportunities. Formal military schooling, per

se, merely enhances his usefulness to the Army; it is the selection process which provides the key motivation for the course to be followed from that point. A form of military education (formal) is available throughout an officers' career as the Army provides specialized courses to prepare specific officers for selected positions. These courses will not impact on the Specialist-Generalist issue as officers in both categories may attend in preparation for a near-term assignment.

Fourth, military training connotes skill training of the vocational type . . . or in the Army, relatively more physical than mental, although both are included. Examples might be Ranger or parachute training, although one speaks of "language training" which is almost purely an academic exercise. However, my reason for separating the issues of military education and training lies both in the intent of the system and the perception of the officer corps. The generalist probably needs more of the purely military combative/physical training skill than does a specialist. However, in any training skill, perhaps certain specialists may need even more than the generalist. The generalist may have greater need for an acquaintance or experience with a total family of skills which are obtained from strictly military sources. This is different from that wider body of knowledge gained in civil educational institutions or the US Military Academy. The military services are replete with military skill courses which obviously serve both generalists and specialists. Officers who command units containing personnel who have gained skills from these sources are obviously more familiar with capabilities and limitations when their own background includes similar experiences. Further, many of these military skills (e.g., Arctic or Jungle Warfare, parachutist, ranger, etc.) are contained in

extremely high densities in our combat units where the preponderance of our office generalists will serve. Because, the thrust of this paper involves the question of whether we are preparing our commanders properly, the answer would be influenced by how well we select commanders from officers who have obtained a wide -- or the widest spectrum of military skills relative to their peer group -- range of skill pertinent to the type of command they have. To have obtained these skills the officers must have spent the time (months and years) in the environment being served by these skill-producing schools and courses. Time becomes a critical factor in preparing an officer for command.

2. Assignments. In a survey of Army War College students in 1970 by LTC Paul R. O'Mary, more than two thirds (68%) of the respondents considered that command experience at progressive levels of command is of greatest value to the officers' professional development. Thirty-two percent considered that staff experience and military schooling were adequate. Forty-two percent supported the idea that every officer should acquire a specialty in addition to his branch qualification, but numerous qualifications by respondents indicated that "very few" officers supported the idea that every officer should become a member of a formal specialist program. A number of officers considered that some of the specialist programs fall within the definition of "branch qualification".¹⁶ The thrust of the study indicated concern with the Army's embryo specialty program nearly 4 years before its introduction to the Army in the form of today's OPMS. The career path followed by officers tends to produce a way of predicting future performance. The assignment program under OPMS optimizes the total utilization of the officer corps for the entire Army. It does a superb job of getting most officers assigned to the right job for his grade and skills

(read "specialty") commensurate with the needs of the field where the assignment originates. Assignment officers at MILPERCEN try to match known requirements with existing officers by considering the job description, specialty qualifications, professional development needs, and personal desires of the officer. Thus, the system is initially driven by the description of the job. The result is that, generally, only officers with similar skills will have an opportunity to perform the job. And therein lies the rub!

Officers seek assignments for a variety of reasons, but with the need to have two specialties, an eye is always kept on the opportunity to develop the two the individual most desires. The opportunity to serve in a given specialty occurs very infrequently during an officer's two- or three-year stabilized tour at any given installation. Timing the assignment (or reassignment within the installation) is always critical and often a matter of luck. Too frequently, unforeseen events, such as promotions and movement of other officer, vacancies produced by structure changes, compassionate reassignments, assignment limitations at any level from MILPERCEN to MACOM to installation to division to unit, and other events impact on the assignment of any given officer. In reality, the qualifications and personal attributes of the officer himself — especially if highly competent, experienced and personable — tend to limit rather than enhance his opportunity for reassignment in the same, but opposite, way that a "bad reputation" limits assignment opportunities at the local level. Increased stabilization, both in geographical locations and in job assignments, limit the opportunity for officers to perform various, but related, duties below installation level, or to serve in personal or special staff positions outside of a desired specialty track (an example would be as Aide de-

Carp at the grade of LT or CPT). The limited time (months and years before promotion out of grade) available to them, combined with the OPMS-driven need to acquire a specialty (which the officer wants vs. one given him by MILPERCEN) significantly pressures junior officers to try to outline their career progression prematurely.

3. Experience. OPMS strives to determine specialties by considering not only an officer's personal desires, but also his formal (and informal) civilian and military education, and his experience. The MILPERCEN professional development personnel consider four factors in making a specialty designation: (1) Army requirements, (2) education and experience, (3) demonstrated performance and potential, and (4) prefer-

This indicates that experience and education are predominant when matching officer data with the Army's requirements. The specialty designation process begins when every officer enters active duty status. His initial specialty is affiliated with a branch. The additional specialty is designated by the completion of eight years of federal active commissioned service. Briefly, the additional specialty maybe tentatively designated almost immediately based upon academic qualifications, or later after an event such as obtaining an advanced degree. However, the officer may request designation in a given specialty at anytime, based upon his jobs, off-duty education or other interests with some basis. About 90 percent of the officers receive their specialty designation through this process by the eighth year. It should be mentioned that officers have the opportunity to change if the request can be supported by academic achievement or duty experience, sound logic, a strong desire by the officer, and the needs of the Army.¹⁷ However, experience in a given specialty area is a strong element of future use in it.

IV. REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMAND

The 1970 Study on Military Professionalism by the Army War College recommended that certain officer assignment priorities and policies be revised, to include policy regarding the duration and essentiality of command tours, by such means as (1) assigning lieutenant colonels and colonels to TOE command positions from MILPERCEN-OPD, (2) making stability in command positions at battalion and brigade level first among assignment and military education priorities, and (3) removing from the optimum career patterns from combat arms officers the requirement that to advance rapidly in grade they must command both at battalion and brigade levels. Several caveats were provided, however. First, to implement the above required a change in the assumption that command is necessary for rapid promotion. Second, that centralized command selection boards have greater competence in selecting commanders than do individuals in the field who have incomplete information upon which to base their selections. Third, it is necessary to accompany the increased stabilization in command assignments with changes in career pattern concepts of the essentiality of command for combat arms officers. Finally, because of increasing complexity in the profession, the assumption that officers need command and high level staff to perform, understand the "big picture," and be ready for promotion should be re-examined. Much of the above has been implemented since 1970.¹⁸

The officer corps reads the policy, hears the words, but looks to

the actions of promotion and command selection boards for proof of the "real" direction the Army is going. "Who are the selectees and what are their careers like?" is the response of the practical, realistic junior officer in the field.

A. Official Army View. For the most recent guidance to a selection board, that provided the FY 1983 Colonel Level Command Selection Board is now available. It stated:

The primary criteria for troop command are the demonstrated ability and potential to lead troops. Previous experience . . . should be accorded appropriate weight. In addition, consideration . . . must include the proven ability to lead and manage . . . Intelligence, practicality, mature judgement and demonstrated performance should be considered . . . Particular attention should be given to the selection of mature, troop experienced (original emphasis) officers for command.

Selection is based on . . . an officers potential for continued outstanding service to the Army. The officers entire record should be used The board must consider proficiency in performance and not be influenced unduly by diversity of assignments on the level at which duties are performed.

The analysis . . . should include a review of the following factors: (1) Integrity and character . . . scrupulous ethical and moral standards, (2) . . . sensitivity to others and the ability to communicate a sincere concern for soldiers and their family members . . . (3) Record of performance . . . (and) intelligence and creativity and professional competence . . . (4) General physical condition. (5) Attitude, dedication and service . . . attention must be given to the selfless officer. (6) Attendance at a Senior Service College or a Command and Staff College is not a prerequisite for command selection.¹⁹

The essence of the above instructions is that: "particular attention should be give to . . . mature, troop experienced officers for command." the emphasis later turns to qualities and attributes such as integrity, sensitivity, intelligence, competence, attitude, dedication and service. In a nutshell, command experience . . . or, at least, "troop time" is still key. And well it should be!

B. The Individual View. Commanders are officer generalists who are needed, as they always have been, to command combined arms units. These officers are usually officers who are good in any capacity, command or staff. There are officers who are good commanders and poor staff officers. There are officers who are good staff officers and poor commanders. There are officers good at neither. Officers with similar backgrounds, training, and experience can fall into any of the four categories as can officers with dissimilar backgrounds, training, and experience. An extremely high percentage of the Army's generals believe that the Army possesses outstanding staff officers who cannot function successfully in a command assignment. The break out expressed in 1969, was as follows:

	Agree	Disagree
Vietnam Commanders:	89%	11%
DOD, Joint Staffs Attaches:	90%	10%
DA General Staff:	95%	5%
DA Special Staff:	100%	0
CONUS/Overseas Commands:	96%	4%

This study was reported out by Horton and O'Mary.²⁰

The general feeling is that demonstrated command capacity in branches in which such command capability is essential should weigh more heavily than simply "indicated potential" for such command. The method which has been used by the military has been highly successful, that is, the varied assignments an officer experiences as he progresses in rank. At issue is whether increasing specialization has spelled disaster for a system that requires successful completion of a varied number and types of duties. By examining demonstrated performance in a wide variety of

assignments, especially including command, the centralized selection boards can successfully select officers whose potential is predictable based upon their past performances.

C. Failure by Commanders. The same study by Horton outlined some of the more common causes of failure by commanders. A review of these provides some insight as to whether the problem is an institutional one, the selection system, the impact of creeping specialization, or simply human/individual weaknesses of character, attitude, desire, etc. The four most common causes of failure by combat commanders in Vietnam were: (1) was not a fighter, (2) failed to achieve favorable results, (3) lack of recent troop experience of the officer concerned, (4) lack of overall competence. Other causes cited were: poor judgement, insufficient drive, did not share danger with his men, took bad breaks for granted, immersed himself in too much detail, could not maintain control of unit, lack of tactical feel and leadership, lacked psychological stamina, lack of a real desire to command, failure to set high standards, indecisive, and failure to be a team player. In this study six of the most common causes of failure given by all generals were (listed in order):

- o lack of overall competence
- o motivation
- o lack of experience in the job or similar jobs
- o failure to achieve results
- o leadership ability
- o certain attributes demanded by nature of the job

A tentative conclusion is that the Army is not meeting its obligation to the officer corps. Significant differences do exist in the attributes required to perform successfully as a commander, staff professional, or a specialist. In most instances, it is the failure of

the officer to capitalize on the strong qualities of his personality.²¹

Both Horton and O'Mary concluded: that specialization is necessary to meet the needs of the Army; that successful command experience at the field grade level should be a prerequisite for combat arms officers to be promoted to the general officer grades; that command and staff assignments must be rotated in order to define the upper limits of competence and success for each officer; and, that ability level notwithstanding, the rotation of officers through command and staff positions is essential to the training of an officer.²²

This review of failing factors was provided to focus on the issue of creating success in future commanders.

D. Future Requirements. The battlefield depicted in the scenario for the Airland Battle 2000 will tax the ingenuity, competence, and stamina of small unit commanders. The battlefield efficiency will depend upon a high ratio of leaders to followers. This means more smaller units, with more leaders. Proficiency will be key. Motivation will be vital. In addition, highly intelligent and highly trained/skilled officers will be required to optimize the high technology being introduced in a continuously changing environment. Force modernization will cause unprecedented disruption in units leading to a need for great skill in managing change by future officers. The point here is that officers will be "optimized" in a few duty positions and will be less able to move successfully through numerous duties requiring a high degree of specialization because they will fail to keep abreast of technical development by virtue of having to learn the jobs. On the surface this would seem to mean that specialization is mandated. On the contrary, a distinction needs to be made between a specialty (job

description) and a functional specialty (general family of related jobs requiring less in-depth expertise). In this latter category I would place the commander of a tactical unit. The future leaders are going to be strained to develop and ~~sub~~sustain soldiers capable of achieving optional/maximum performance everyday, in peace or war. The essential development of the "warrior spirit", mental toughness and physical conditioning, integrated with technical skill in his soldiers will require his full energy. The leader — officer — in this environment will have to be quickly and accurately evaluated, tested and, if proven, locked into repetitive tours where in his "specialized" skill is not dissipated by "unaimed assignments".

Thus, the Army's and the individuals' views of command and what it means to be a commander must rapidly come together to fertilize the growing need for job satisfaction, expertise, and development of these unique officers. We need specialization for most of the staff duties above division. But below the Corps, we need to nurture the promising young officer-leader/commander/manager who will command and staff our combat units. Keep him in this environment and remove the pressures (or incentives) which cause dissatisfaction and migration from this vital area.

V. CONCLUSIONS: GENERALISTS VS. SPECIALISTS AS COMMANDERS

The selections of the general officer boards reflect most convincingly the values our Army's officer corps holds with regard to the qualities of future leadership. Generalists are normally chosen for command positions at the 06 level, and to a lesser degree at the 05 level. Division commanders possess generalist traits to an even greater degree . . . unless the art of leading/managing combat units and the accrued experience therewith constitute a form of specialization. The expert in all aspects of the "Art of War" is tomorrow's best commander, assuming leadership ability and managerial skill. The point is that generalists are selected for command. The generalist may or may not qualify as a specialist — or a functional specialist — but this specialty expertise should not detract from the broad based experience obtained from duty with different types of combat arms units in a variety of positions. The problem lies in the opportunity for an individual to do both — time is against him.

The following issues are elements of the answer, though the ultimate form of the "Approved Solution" is yet to be seen. The research, study and experience of the author form the nucleus for the following conclusions:

A. The best commanders have the qualities and attributes necessary for leadership, enhanced with the experience of a variety of duty positions. This provides an in-depth understanding of what makes

combat arms units fight successfully.

B. OPMS provides the Army with the specialists we need, but it does not allow/encourage the development of what I will call "Art of War" specialists needed to command our combat arms units from company to division levels. It pushes young officers out of combat units at the earliest possible time in order for them to begin establishing specialty experience.

C. If the Army were to allow generalists to develop and be utilized outside the OPMS structure of/for specialization, civilian education in broad fields would still be beneficial for them. The Army needs intelligent, highly trained experts to lead the Army in war and in peacetime when "battles" are fought over turf and budgets with civilian experts. Therefore, to "generalize" does not allow the Army to fail to educate or train.

D. Keep the OPMS system, but redefine specialty areas and provide for functional areas containing several specialties which do not require highly specialized technical training or narrowly bounded utilization. For example, all staff duties at battalion level — especially for the combat arms — could be identified in the broad terminology of "troop duty", but could still be identified within the narrow limits of a lower-level specialty with possible application later in a career. Or perhaps this should occur within a division. At any rate, allow the officer to perform any duty within the division (or brigade, or battalion) and simply identify it as "troop duty". If the officer chooses to remain in lower level assignments (up through the grade of O5) as a staff officer he can do so without prejudice and further specialization. For those officers wishing to specialize in a field requiring more

highly skilled expertise or civilian education — and who have either chosen to leave or demonstrated a "poor fit" for the troop duty mold — progress in another track should be available.

E. OPMS adjustments require changes to support systems. It must be possible to elect "troop duty" specialization and be successful in progressing with peers to schools, for promotion and for selective assignments. Command positions would, for the combat arms, normally — but not exclusively — be filled from the ranks of the "troop duty" category officers. Eliminate the requirement for selection boards to select from officers who have demonstrated proficiency in two specialties. Perhaps a modicum of experience in three or more specialty areas should equate satisfactorily to greater in-depth expertise in only two.

F. Force Modernization will cause significant problems in the functioning of OPMS unless limits are placed on input and changes to The Army Authorization Document System (TAADS). Well-meaning officers in the field may generate requirements to mal-utilize on-site officer resources to meet local mission requirements, changing TAADS data frequently, subverting the system, and doing incurable damage to the officers caught in these practices.

G. The Army needs to provide for generalists to step outside the system (OPMS) for utilization. The problem then becomes one of assignments, career progression opportunities, training, and "fall-out" or "fall-back" positions when a failure to be promoted or the desire to move out of the "troop duty" specialty occurs. Perhaps centrally selected commanders can come from this pool of officially identified manager/generalists as well as non-OPMS commanders. Or perhaps, we terminate the slating element of centralized command selection — and only centrally select the "pool" by year group . . . allowing Division, corps

and MACOM commanders the prerogative of choosing commanders based on personal knowledge, desires for specific personalities, tailoring individual strengths to specific command characteristics of the unit, compatibility, family concerns, etc. Officers in such a "pool" should have the option of nonprejudicial reclassification as a specialist and return to such duty at all times as an option.

H. The stigma of careerism needs to be removed from the Army's rhetoric and practices. It is blatantly unnatural and abnormal for an individual to fail to care about what happens to himself and his family. That is not to say that selflessness is not a virtue; however, officers, like their civilian counterparts, should be free to plan and direct their own careers within the recognized "needs of the service". Some would say, "that can be done now". True, but not nearly often enough without more senior (and peer and subordinate) officers considering such self-direction and desire for self-satisfaction and/or self-actualization to be "careerism," an unfavorable impression. The Army needs to face reality or it will lose lots of superb, aggressive, challenge-oriented soldiers!

I. The Army has better leadership training than any other such large entity in the business or educational world. We study ourselves into inaction because of the continuing number and increasing complexity of study groups, reviews, research projects, etc. In fact, one source of information for this paper, *The Study on Military Professionalism* by the Army War College in 1970, contains a wealth of superb thinking and recommendations some of which have new applicability. Many attitudes have not changed, although the Army has implemented new policies, procedures, rules and regulations. We need to listen to ourselves

and respond to basic human issues previously identified. I conclude that we have the people with the right talents and attitudes, but the system needs to be altered to allow us more flexibility in utilizing them. In short, lets allow our generalists to develop by not requiring early specialization, but allowing it where merited. And let's capitalize on leadership training, techniques, and practices we already know.

In conclusion, our commanders need to develop a broad base of expertise, but certainly may be "experts" (in the specialist sense of the word) if time, circumstances and experience have allowed it to occur. The battlefield of the future will require greater technical skill at the same time the breadth of such demands may be growing beyond human bounds. Specialization of the officer corps helps to solve the needs of the Army as a "total system," but will fail to place the skilled generalist in command on the battlefield where the ultimate need exists. Changes in OPMS are required.

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